/389 cont./

997 treatment was conditioned by the nature of the disease, or if, on the contrary, similar cures are undertaken each time that an Indian becomes seriously ill.

955 [953] A habitual drunkard, of a quarrelsome and violent temperament, had been taken ill after one of the numerous festivals which the Chipaya celebrate during the rainy season, where he had drunk and excited himself more than usual. /390/ Was he suffering from terrible indigestion? Did he have an attack of epilepsy? I do not know, but the fact is that he suddenly fell to the ground where he remained for a long time in a cataleptic state. The terrified spectators thought that he was dead and were not far from intoning funeral lamentations. He himself, when he regained his senses, judged his state to be desperate. He claimed that a large ball was moving up and down in his stomach without stopping.

955 957 956 His case was given to an Indian who had nothing to show that he was a doctor or magician. He was a young man who had no particular authority and filled no office at the festivals. Besides he made only rare appearances in the village. Consulted at once, he began by conducting an inquiry on the origins of the illness, giving an attentive ear to the narratives and hypotheses of his client's relatives and friends. It was only then, with complete knowledge of the cause, that he uttered his final diagnosis: two superb topu (silver pins with flattened heads) which had been transmitted from generation to generation in the patient's family were the sole things responsible for the accident. By virtue of a malicious power inherent in their nature, they had pierced the stomach of their owner, trying to kill him. They had been assisted in this crime by a silver Peruvian coin worth a quarter of a real, which [961] the sick man had also inherited from his father. No one could doubt that these precious topu were dangerous: the best proof of the terrible influence which emanated from them was the sickness and death of the patient's mother, which public opinion attributed to these ornaments. The magician's first duty hence was to exorcise them and to neutralize their action by putting them in contact with beneficent magical substances.